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# The University Library*

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Being asked to discuss the University Library in a fifteen minute paper makes me feel as Edward Gibbon must have felt when the young lady seated next to him at a dinner party said to him, "Dear Mr. Gibbon, now do tell me all about the decline and fall of the Roman Empire!" It is a pretty big subject, but the previous speaker's treatment of the correlation of the work of the college library and the student is so full that it makes my task somewhat easier.

A university is not merely a higher grade college, where facts are doled out to maturer students, but an institution for the increase of knowledge. Research and specialized or professional training are the aim of the university, as distinguished from the college. Professional departments necessitate professional libraries. The professional departments are built as a superstructure on the undergraduate or college department. The professional libraries of a university are an outgrowth of the general or college library. The university library is differentiated from the college library chiefly in its scope. As the university frequently includes a complete college course, so the university library in its scope includes not only the activities of the college library, but it has problems peculiarly its own. These are chiefly the provision of literature for research, the administration of departmental libraries, and the correlation of these departmental libraries to one another and to the main library. President Gilman defined a university as "an institution for the promotion of higher education by means of instruction, the encouragement of literary and scientific investigation, the collection of books and apparatus, and the bestowal of degrees." The collection of books in different universities will differ as widely as the institutions themselves. Universities have been said to be universal in their scope and so have something to do with everything. From this point of view, nothing is alien to a university library, which should shelter universal literature; but in any particular university library, narrowly limited in its funds, as it is sure to be, the selection of books must be kept within bounds, with more or less strict reference to the interests of the various departments of the university.

Our early university libraries were, of course, a reflex of the curriculum of earlier days. The classical course, with its emphasis on cultural studies, and professional courses in law, medicine and theology, limited the book collections very narrowly, and, with the old method of text book teaching, the need of enormous libraries was not very strongly felt. But to-day, with the faculty devoting a large part of its energy to research, with more attention being paid to the graduate school, and with the lecture and laboratory systems in vogue, the library occupies a much more important place in the organization of the university. "The library and the laboratory," said the late President Harper, "have already practically revolutionized the methods of higher education." "In a really modern institution," said he, "the chief building is the library; it is the centre of the institutional activity."

A university must be something more than an aggregation of training schools for the learned professions; it must befriend learning and encourage research. Consequently the university library must be supplied with funds for the purchase of the books needed in special investigations by members of the faculty and the graduate school. The question of providing the books needed in a piece of literary or historical research is frequently a more serious one than when the investigation is in the field of pure science. The books take the place of laboratory material and, as we are often told, the library is the laboratory of the humanistic departments. In the assignment of book funds this must be borne in mind and a more generous allotment made to literature or to history than to chemistry or physics, for example. In

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the selection of a subject for research the professor in charge ought not to lose sight of the resources of the library and he ought not to assign a subject to a student if an adequate representation of the source material is not in the university library or cannot be provided without curtailing unduly the resources of the department. The demand for all the editions of a minor author who may be the subject of a doctorate dissertation, may be legitimate enough and it may be argued that the university ought to encourage research by providing all these editions, but they ought not to be asked for at the expense of the all-round efficiency of the library. If a student at the University of Illinois is working on Cowper it would be cheaper for that institution to allow him a stipend for a sojourn at Cornell University, where there is a special collection of works by and about that author, than to try to collect the literature anew.

In the duplication of English authors for the general use of students the question arises as to what extent these should be extra copies of one edition or single copies of different editions. The desk assistant prefers to have all the Kiplings and all the Stevensons of the same edition, so that, after she has located a short story or a poem in one copy, she can find it with equal ease in another copy when the first one is not available. On the other hand, for bibliographical reasons and for purposes of comparison, it is unquestionably better to have a dozen different editions of Shakespeare rather than a dozen copies of one edition. The resources of the library for purposes of investigation are not increased by the purchase of extra copies of a single edition, even though that edition is the standard one. But by the collecting of different editions the opportunities for comparative study are greatly enhanced. At the University of Michigan we have a rule of the Board of Regents which prohibits the purchase of duplicate copies of books from the General Library fund. Duplicates are ordinarily to be bought from special grants made to the various departments for administrative needs, being regarded as necessary equipment just as much as is laboratory apparatus. This rule does not affect the purchase of innumerable editions of standard authors.

The question of specializing along one line or another is always before a university library. It is quite impossible for the average university library to be equally strong in many lines. Just as the departments vary in strength so will the library be emphasized on one side more than on another. If the library has a striking lead in one line, it should be developed further along that line, rather than forced into another line because a sister university has developed another side of its library. If Chicago has a special equipment in Semitics there is no particular reason for Michigan trying to rival her sister university in that line, and it would be equally futile for Chicago to try to duplicate Michigan's Shakespearian library. This is not saying that we should not have the essentials of an ordinary working collection for every special subject represented in the university curriculum, and for other subjects of interest to several departments, although there is no specific instruction in these subjects; but expensive duplication of highly specialized collections is to be deprecated. Specialization should be encouraged among libraries as well as among investigators and when a library has an exceptionally rich special collection it should be marked off as a more or less special preserve for that particular library. This is the only way that our resources can be made nationally adequate. Co-ordination and co-operation must be the watchword.

The use of interlibrary loans should be encouraged. The cost of transportation for the out-of-the-way book is much less than the book itself, and, if the book is of a sort that is not likely to be wanted again in a long period, the economy is twofold—not only the purchase price but the cost of handling and storing is saved.

With the cheapening of the processes of making facsimiles, their use is rapidly growing in favor. Facsimiles of manuscripts and early printed books are of the greatest value to American students of language and literature. The Tudor facsimiles of early English plays are a great boon to the English department of any university.

To-day our masters, the public, insist

that the university be made a place where everything useful may be studied, instead of being a place where nothing practical is taught. The clamor for vocational education has had its effect on the university and on the university library. While a few years ago the shelves of the average university library were innocent of anything so mundane as the literature of trade, to-day we have hundreds of titles on business methods, accounting, shop management, and efficiency engineering. The scope of our collection is no longer limited to things academic. Technology is well represented and the useful arts have a fair quota. A whole new literature in regard to various crafts has sprung up and much of this must be acquired by our university libraries. Books on how to do things are now thought worthy of a place under the same roof as erudite editions of the classics. To take one illustration: the literature of journalism is now of sufficient importance to warrant the establishment of a separate departmental library at Columbia University.

While the college stands primarily for cultural interests, the university must be something more than a mere training school for professional experts. The university library (like the college library) must therefore be concerned with things outside the literature of the sciences and professions. There must be a generous supply of cultural literature, so as to insure the proper attitude toward cultural reading among the graduates as they go out to teach. The university library should be a fountain head of cultural influences. In the university library in which I feel a special concern, we have devised a method of putting on inspection shelves books of cultural interest primarily for the benefit of the undergraduate reader. The shelves slope at an easy angle so that a person seated in front of the rack can glance at the titles and choose at leisure. It invites to browsing. The books are indicated as intended for this rack by the use of a red star on the label. This star is put on by a rubber stamp. The case is known as the "Red Star Case" and books are selected for it primarily for their ability to interest the students. The books are not necessarily new purchases; some have been in the library for years without having their attractions discovered by the students, and the books are found in the stack as fresh as when first acquired. To merit a place on the Red Star Case, the books must look inviting; no shabby or rebound volumes are put out, nor is it ever used for proselyting, although we have been asked to put there a lot of literature on various crusades (sex hygiene, swat the fly, and the like). The case would lose some of its popularity, if the students suspected that it was being used to give them sugar-coated courses. At the University of Michigan we do much in this line of cultural reading that need not be done in a university situated in a large city where there is a good public library, or in the suburbs of such a city. There the need for books of cultural value is partly met by these other libraries and the university is spared some of this expense.

The university student must be taught how to work for himself and by himself, in both the laboratory and the library, and while the major part of this instruction must come from his professors, the library staff must be prepared to help in instructing students in the use of the library. In order to be able to assist the research worker, the library assistants must have done some research work themselves, must have learned the methods of the investigator, the use of original sources.

If by chance a university student has escaped library instruction in his high school period or during his college career, the university librarian ought to see to it that he gets some of this instruction while he is at the university. It may be impossible to corral him in a class if he is an advanced student, but nevertheless he ought to be taught how to use the university library and this instruction will probably have to be given him by the reference librarian and desk assistants. While a knowledge of the rudiments of modern library economy is becoming more general in our universities, there are almost every day flagrant illustrations of its absence. At the University of Michigan we find it advisable to require all members of the classes in freshman English to meet with our assistant reference librarian, to listen to a talk on the main features of the library and then to visit the library

under her guidance. This is done by dividing the class into sections of about twenty and the work counts as a regular exercise in the course, the students being expected to write a theme on the library. Talks are given to another class on the more common reference books and how to use the library. While this is more properly the function of the high school or the college library we find that it is needed by the majority of the freshmen in our literary department. Although the students who come to us from the Detroit Central High School show clearly the benefit of the training in the use of a library which they have had under Miss Hopkins, yet we do not feel that it is time wasted for them to listen to our Miss Gillette, for she is sure to correlate their general information with reference to our own special library conditions and to drive home some truths which, while they may have been heard before, can with profit be heard again. We are always sure that to the majority of our freshmen the information given them in regard to the library and how to use it is an essential introduction to their course at the University.

And what of the university librarian? He must be a man of wide sympathies, one who will welcome with equal cordiality a gift to the classical library and an addition to the library of the engineering department, and be as much interested in the literature of homeopathy as in that of the regular school of medicine. When one professor complains that there is a lot of trash being admitted to the library shelves (meaning the literature of some other professor's specialty) the librarian must keep his own counsel, while remembering that the complaining specialist is perhaps stronger in his field because he thinks that no other subject is of the same importance. The librarian must take a neutral stand; he must regard as grist every thing that comes to his mill. He must see forty ways at one time and be posted on the interests of all his colleagues on the faculty. If he is alert he can see needs that they are unaware of and if endowed with persuasive powers he can secure for his library many things which will be of great benefit to the whole institution.

## Review

Gibson, Strickland. Some Oxford libraries. Oxford: University Press, 1914. 119 p.

As the title clearly indicates, this attractive little volume does not aim to be all inclusive, but limits itself to a popular account of the "Ancient Library of the University," "Duke Humphrey's Library," "Bodley's Library," "Some notable Bodleian books," "Records, chiefly Bodleian," "Mediæval college libraries," and "Eighteenth century libraries." The book can be heartily commended to American librarians as giving the spirit of Oxford and being a good introduction to its library stores.

In his preface the author very modestly says that this book lays no claim to original research and is mainly intended for those who wish to learn rather more about the older Oxford libraries than may be gathered from works of reference and guide-books. It does not aim to describe all the Oxford libraries, but only those deemed worthy of special mention and those which will best repay a visit. The book has the great merit of readableness and will be sure to interest more people in the subject of the libraries of Oxford than many dry-as-dust tomes compiled from original records.

Six out of the eight chapters treat of the ancient University library or its successor, the Bodleian. There was a time when well-intentioned people considered the Bodleian as a suitable repository for curiosities and freaks. The public failed to distinguish between a library and a museum and among the donations are recorded such things as a crocodile from Jamaica, a sea-elephant, a whale caught in the Severn, and a skull, a mummy, a skeleton, a tanned human skin, the dried body of a negro boy, and a negro baby in a jar of alcohol. Uffenbach, the German student and traveler of the beginning of the eighteenth century, says that the Bodleian was much frequented by visitors, among them boors and women, who stared at the library like a cow at a new gate. The chief objects of interest were two small, worm-eaten leaves from the siege of Oxford, Queen Elizabeth's heelless shoe, the skeleton of a pygmy, a map of China, the dried hand of a siren, the Devil's alphabet, and Joseph's coat of many colors. That the Bodleian was very early appreciated at its real worth by scholars we have ample evidence. When Sir Francis Bacon published in 1605 his "Advancement of learning" he sent a copy to Bodley with a letter saying: "You, having built an ark to save learning from deluge, deserve propriety

in any new instrument or engine whereby learning should be improved or advanced." Friends sprang up on all sides. The librarian, in the preface to his catalog of 1605, said that already there seemed to be more need of a library for the books, than of books for the library.

Samuel Daniel prefixed to a newly augmented edition of his own works, printed in 1602, some dedicatory lines in praise of the "Libraries of Oxford, erected by Sir Thomas Bodley, knight." They begin thus:

> Heere in this goodly magazine of witte
> This storehouse of the choisest furniture
> The world doth yeelde, heere in this exquisite
> And most rare monument, that dooth immure
> The glorious reliques of the best of men;
> Thou, part imperfect work, voutsafed art
> A little roome, by him whose care hath beene
> To gather all whatever might impart
> Delight or profite to posteritie.

In the chapters on "Mediaeval college libraries" and "Eighteenth century libraries," Merton College Library, the oldest in England, and the pattern for all the earlier college libraries, is naturally included, as is Corpus because of its connection with the English Renaissance and its beautiful building. St. John's, on account of its association with William Laud, archbishop of Canterbury; the library of Jesus College because of its being preserved in its original state; Queen's College Library, as an ornate and elaborate example along mediaeval lines, and All Souls as a specimen of the Italian style, are singled out for special description. Other libraries, says Mr. Gibson, which appear to promise much have but little to offer. Wadham, for example, beautifully situated in a college grove, loses its attraction as soon as the visitor steps within its walls, and the most interesting fact of its history is that, by direction of its founders, it was located above the kitchen for the sake of extra warmth and dryness.

That Mr. Gibson has a fine feeling for the sentiment and the associations that cling around these repositories of forgotten authors is shown by his description of the Old Library of Jesus College, "one of the most charming of Oxford libraries, and one of the least frequented, built and furnished by Sir Leoline Jenkins about 1676. It is entered by a broad winding oak staircase, and consists of a long, well-lighted room with small windows on either side, and a large window facing the southwest. Two rows of oak bookcases extend the length of the room, each side of a case having four rows of books—the folios ranged below, and the quartos and octavos above. On the side of each case is a frame, divided into two compartments, designed to contain a list of the books on the shelves. On the right hand, between the bookcases, are low oak benches with panelled backs, narrow counters sloping towards them from the lower row of folios. . . . In the Long Vacation, when the College is tenantless, the silence will be broken only, at every hour, by 'the sound of many bells.' The books are mostly of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There are stately Biblia Polyglotta, learned commentaries of Thomas Aquinas, Tostatus and Alfonso Salmeron, long superseded editions of the classics, ponderous works on antiquities, and dreary rows of Concilia and legal Acta. The walls of the gallery are lined with long rows of miscellaneous books in varying tints of brown, and in all stages of decay. Here are the books of Science, ancient medical treatises, sets of the Acta Eruditorum and the Annual Register, and numerous volumes of pamphlets bearing on long-forgotten controversies. This, then, is the Old Library, the peace of which is rarely disturbed. It is, in fact, a mausoleum of books long since dead; for can any change of scholarship quicken old Tostatus and raise him from the grave; will any theologian, save out of mere curiosity, ever pore again over the sixteen folio volumes of Alfonso Salmeron? It is only by a few antiquaries that the old books are taken from their shelves. The undergraduates never enter, indeed some have never heard of the Old Library. It is elsewhere, in the Undergraduates' Library, that the present generation seeks learning."

The college libraries of Oxford and Cambridge and many of the European university libraries are so bound by traditions that they have little of administrative practice that can help the American college or university librarian solve his problems, but as fore-runners of our own academic libraries their history should be more familiar to American librarians than it is. The relations of the libraries of the various colleges of Oxford and Cambridge are not clearly marked. Most of them grew up without respect to what had been done in the neighboring college libraries and there has been very little co-ordination between these separate collegiate libraries. At Oxford, for example, the great stream of books flows into the Bodleian, which is the central research library of the university. The Commission of 1850 very properly suggested that the resources of both the Bodleian and the college libraries might be expended in a manner more conducive to the general interests of learning, so that they might be made to supplement rather than re-

peat the Bodleian. Unfortunately very little came of the suggestion and in 1871 the librarians of the various colleges met and it was decided that the colleges, instead of continuing to make sporadic purchases from the whole field of literature should rather husband their limited resources and restrict themselves to a special province. Comparative philology was to be looked after by Oriel; philosophy by Baliol; modern history by Merton, Trinity and Brasenose; classical archaeology by Worcester and theology by Lincoln. Baliol and Worcester succeeded in keeping somewhat to the plan as laid down, but for the most part the scheme was not very fruitful. However, there has been some further specialization, as in the law library at All Souls, the library of foreign literature at the Taylor Institution, and the physical science library at the New Museum. Likewise at Cambridge, each of the twenty-eight colleges possesses a library, largely independent of its sister libraries. Only one is furnished with a card catalog. Most of the books are of interest only to antiquarians and bibliographers. Consequently they are very rarely used by the undergraduates.

In looking over a collection of books on Oxford Colleges, I was much impressed with the richness of this section of library history, and was reminded of a conversation I had with Mr. Gibson while visiting the Bodleian last year. At that time he assured me that no one was more conscious than he of the fact that he had merely touched the surface of things in the present publication. May he be encouraged to give us the fruits of further research!

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